

Wetheram
The friends of the Rev.
W. Lindsey, vicar of Catterick

L E T T E R S

On the SUBJECT of

SUBSCRIPTION

TO THE

L I T U R G Y

AND

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

OF THE

CHURCH of ENGLAND.

[Price One Shilling.]

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On the SUBJECT of

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TO THE

L I T U R G Y

A N D

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

O F T H E

CHURCH of ENGLAND:

First printed in the WHITEHALL-EVENING-POST
under the Signature of PAULINUS;

NOW REPRINTED, with NOTES and ADDITIONS.

Humbly Dedicated to the MEMBERS of the Honourable HOUSE
of COMMONS, and the TWO UNIVERSITIES,

By the AUTHOR.

The Rev. Mr. Jebb of Cambridge

L O N D O N :

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MDCC LXXII.

LETTERS

SUBSCRIPTION

TO THE

THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES

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LETTERS, &c.

To ———, Esq; Member of Parliament
for the County of ———.

LETTER I.

SIR,

I HAVE no occasion to inform you that a Petition of the Clergy, &c. in all probability will in a short time be submitted to you, as a member of the Legislature. You have already considered the subject with some degree of attention. You have urged objections both to the subject matter, and mode of application, which are deserving of a reply; and I shall think myself happy, if the answers which I give you in all simplicity and plainness, shall lessen the weight of those prejudices you seem to have conceived both against the Petitioners and their cause.

Upon the first mention of the intended application, you exclaimed, 'What have we to do as Laymen with the affairs of the Church? Our Prelates have made these matters the study of their lives—You have a Legislation and Canons of your own—Even with respect to Lay concerns, we intermeddle not in cases which may be decided by the Courts below—We are incompetent to the jurisdiction—Go to Convocation and to your Bishops for redress.' And is it thus, Sir, as if our controversy were nothing more than a question of words and of names, that you intend to drive us from the judgment seat? We will *not* go up to Jerusalem to be judged; we now stand at the proper tribunal—and Cæsar himself shall in due time be called upon to join in delivering us from
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that unworthy yoke of bondage, under which we so long have groaned *.

* It has been objected to the Scheme of the Petitioners, that the relief they seek is requested from an improper jurisdiction; and designs, which it is impossible they could ever think of accomplishing, have been injuriously imputed to them by their adversaries in this debate. The question is gravely put, Where will this rage of innovation end? I answer only for myself, yet I trust that I shall express the sentiments of many learned and worthy persons in this nation.

An *ex animo* subscription to the truth of systematical Articles of Religion, expressed in unscriptural terms;—an acknowledgment of the intire conformity of a set of obscure metaphysical propositions, to the plain and simple doctrine of the Gospel;—has long appeared grievous to individuals, injurious to the cause of true religion, and prejudicial to the interests of our excellent constitution both in Church and State.

In an age dissipated as the present, nothing appears so likely to restore the moral and religious principle, as an affecting and unexceptionable form of Publick Worship; but in order to effect this purpose, the present Liturgy must be revised: The forms of Ordination also require some amendment.

I assert not these things upon my own authority; nor will I attempt to prove my point from the writings of those who have been injuriously represented as the enemies of our Establishment. I am content to rest the proof with respect to the matter of fact, and the measure of the proposed alterations, upon the testimony of those generous friends to religious liberty and virtue, who, in various periods of our constitution, have adorned the English Church.

Let all subscription to human formularies of faith and doctrine be utterly abolished.

Let the ordinals and forms of publick worship partake of the improvement of the times. Here would I fix my foot; and were these things granted, I would resolutely oppose any further alteration in the Church.

Let us now enquire concerning the mode of conducting alterations apparently so important to the interests of the community; and the authority by which they must be effected. The abolition of Subscriptions, and the revival of the Liturgy, cannot with propriety be produced by the same jurisdiction, and at the same time.

Subscription to human formularies is required from many orders of the Laity, as well as from the Clergy. An act of parliament therefore can alone effect an adequate relief.

The measure for obtaining such relief, should originate in the House of Commons, as the temporalities of the subject are concerned. Were the Petitioners to intreat a *revival* of the Articles,

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Permit me, Sir, to remind you, that the moderate Clergy of these times lay claim to no higher

the whole might be referred to Convocation; but as a repeal of the laws enjoining subscription to them is requested, the truth, or the congruity of them with Scripture, does not come into the debate;—the expediency of an *ex animo* assent to them, in a Protestant country, is the only subject of dispute; and of this an House of Commons may and ought to judge, without requesting any assistance from the Church. A petition to the King for an abolition of Subscription would be equally absurd; I should as soon expect to hear from sensible men of a petition to the King for a diminution of the land tax. Let us suppose, then, that, through the integrity and spirit of the Commons, the wisdom of the Lords, the humanity and the piety of the King, the Petitioners are relieved from the necessity of subscribing their unfeigned assent to any humanly-devised formularies of faith.

A little reflection will shew, that this relief would be *final* with respect to one point, but as a preparatory step only to the completion of an entire reformation; the Liturgy would still be read in our churches unimproved, under the penalties established by law.

In order to effect a complete reformation, therefore, a revival of the Liturgy must follow in due time; but a question arises concerning the nature of the application. I will not be so presumptuous as to decide with respect to the part the House of Commons, or the House of Lords, might, upon a proper representation, take in the affair. Most assuredly the Houses of Convocation should not be consulted: The formal proposal for a revival might originate with the King; or, if this should be thought improper, a dutiful petition from the Bishops and Clergy, or either House of Parliament, may hereafter be presented to his Majesty, that he would be pleased to appoint a commission of Bishops, and other learned persons, both of the Laity and Clergy, to revise the ordinals and established forms of publick worship. They should enter upon their task with all proper assistances; and when completed, should submit the Liturgy, thus revised, to the Legislature of the nation, who should establish the use of it in our churches, in that manner which seems to them expedient. The plan of reformation would be then completed.

But the request of the present Petitioners reaches only to the repeal of those laws which injoin *subscription* to humanly-devised formularies of faith; and the propriety of such request should be submitted to the Representatives of the People, who, exclusively of all others, are the proper persons to apply to, in a case which so immediately affects the temporalities of the subject.

authority than what is derived to them from the civil Magistrate and the laws of this realm. They are stiled indeed, not unfrequently, the Ministers of Christ; and they justly are esteemed so, because their office obliges them to be occupied in the gospel of Christ. But with respect to their appointment, and the prescribed rules of their conduct, they are the Ministers of the State. The Representatives of the People in Parliament, united with the other two branches of the Legislature, have given their sanction to Christianity as the established religion of this land. As a member of a Protestant community, every Englishman maintains the authority and sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures in all points necessary to salvation; and by a charter derived from the God of reason and the gospel; a charter, which as it interferes not with any temporal jurisdiction, cannot justly be controuled by human authority; he claims the unalienable privilege of interpreting those Scriptures for himself. In these circumstances, and with these privileges, a Subject of the Crown of England becomes a licensed teacher of the gospel. He is qualified for his office according to forms, which derive their whole validity from the laws. At the time of this legal Ordination he solemnly declares, that “He is persuaded that the Holy
 “ Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine re-
 “ quired of necessity for eternal Salvation, through
 “ Jesus Christ—that he is determined out of the
 “ same Scriptures to instruct the people com-
 “ mitted to his charge, and to teach nothing
 “ as required of necessity to eternal salvation,
 “ but that which he shall be persuaded may
 “ be concluded and proved by the Scripture:”
 an engagement, which certainly more than AL-
 lows him to interpret those Scriptures, as
 right

right reason, the analogy of Faith, and sound criticism, shall direct—an engagement, which far from binding him to one uniform system of opinions obligatorily through life, lays him under the necessity, not only of changing, but of avowing the alteration of his opinion with respect to the sense of Scripture, as often as better knowledge and maturer consideration shall suggest. But the exercise of this natural liberty of man—of this glorious liberty of the Christian—of this reasonable liberty of the Protestant Teacher in an English Church, is eventually annihilated by an obligation, intirely inconsistent with the preceding declaration—an obligation wherein he *ex animo* declares, and by his SUBSCRIPTION acknowledges certain interpretations of these Scriptures—certain systematical Articles and confessions of faith and doctrine, though confessedly of uninspired original, to be, all and every of them, agreeable to the word of God.

I will only, Sir, request you for a moment to reflect, whether a person who is laid under the latter obligation, and necessitated to conform to it by the additional weight of penal inflictions, can possibly fulfil the former solemn engagement, whereby he promises to preach nothing but what he himself shall be persuaded may be proved by the Scripture. Or whether it is probable that such Minister will be diligent to study God's word, or employ his natural powers and acquired knowledge in the investigation of God's will as therein revealed, who is prohibited from interpreting God's word, or declaring God's will, otherwise than is set down in a prescribed formula, in which the Law will not endure the least variation or diversity of judgment.

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This Inconsistency in the Laws of England, is the private grievance of many individuals—is the public reproach of a Protestant State. This is an Inconsistency which the Parliament of Great Britain can remove, both as possessing a jurisdiction paramount to all other jurisdictions, and as having itself been over-persuaded to lend its sanction to the grievance of which the Petitioners complain. The interference of all other jurisdictions would be impertinent; and the attempt of High Churchmen to arrogate to themselves the authority of judging and deciding in this question, would subject them to the imputation of having deserved a censure, if possible more severe than that, to which too many of them have manifested an inclination of subjecting those of their brethren, who, by waving an application to their superiors in the Church, have shewed, that they think not so presumptuously of the powers annexed to their calling.

I shall take the liberty of troubling you with my further thoughts upon this subject in some future letters; in which I shall endeavour to shew, by additional arguments, that the grievances in question are in strict propriety within the cognizance of a British Parliament—that they are worthy objects of Parliamentary enquiry and redress—that the imposition of any Articles of Faith, as explanatory of the Scriptures, amounts to a solemn renunciation of the SUFFICIENCY of those Scriptures—must moreover be necessarily attended with a large portion of the intolerant spirit, the most odious concomitant of Popish superstitions—and that the Ratification of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the English Church by the authority of Parliament virtually amounts, with respect to points of doctrine of high concernment

cernment to the interests of the Community, to an authoritative Renunciation of the Holy Scriptures themselves.

L E T T E R II.

S I R,

HAVING in my former letter endeavoured to remove some of those prejudices against that mode of application which the Clerical Petitioners have adopted, I shall beg your permission in this, to point out to your observation, some of those circumstances which render the question of Subscription interesting to the Public, and therefore highly worthy of a Parliamentary discussion.

In order to do this in a manner the least liable to subsequent objections, it will be necessary to ascend to some of the first and leading principles of the Social Compact.

I must own, I am not naturally inclined to encourage any great partiality in favour of the Bishop of Gloucester; yet it cannot be denied, but that he has shewn in a very masterly manner the necessity of a religious principle, in order to enforce the observance of the duties of imperfect obligation.

Whatever may have been the private sentiments of Statesmen—however contradictory to each other may have been their tenets—however sceptical in their principles—however profligate in their practice—they are united in believing that a pretty general persuasion in the People of the reality of an over-ruling Providence, and of a future state of retribution, together with an Establishment providing for the inculcating these upon the Subject, are essentially necessary to the
very

very existence as well as to the prosperity of a State.

If something like this be not the case, it is surely a very culpable profusion of the public treasure, that my Lord of Canterbury and my Lord of Durham should receive annually their ten thousands for countenancing religion, and perhaps ten thousand others each their fifties, for preaching it.

Taking this fact then for granted, and the reasonableness of it being allowed, that some hundreds of thousands are annually expended for the purpose of generating, inculcating, and supporting the religious principle, a question arises, Whether the Establishment, as now circumstanced fully, answers that end?

But in order to judge upon this subject with more precision, let us feign to ourselves an Utopian Establishment of religion—an Establishment, which shall be assisting to the honest views of the Magistrate, consolatory to the individual, and friendly to the general interest of mankind.

For instance, let us suppose, that in one happy kingdom of the earth CHRISTIANITY, as contained in the Scripture, without the addition of any human Articles or formularies of Faith, should be the established religion of the land.

A person who is a subject in such a kingdom, must be understood to be always willing to declare, that “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine—for reproof—for correction—for instruction in righteousness.” He must further be understood to believe, that “God in the beginning created the Heavens and the Earth;”—that “He dwelleth not in temples made with hands;”—that “He is the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of lords;”—that “He giveth to all life and breath, and all things;”—

things;”—that “He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man;”—that “The eyes of all wait upon him, that he may give them their meat in due season—when he openeth his hand, they are filled with good—when he hideth his face they are troubled—when he taketh away their breath, they die, and are turned again to their dust.”

A Member of such an Ideal Establishment must be understood to profess, that “To him there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.”

He must agree with St. Paul, that “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

A Member of such an Establishment must be also understood to profess it to be his real persuasion and belief, that there is a day appointed, in which “God will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained. Whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”

A person who acknowledged himself to be a Member of such an Establishment, would be a good subject, if he acted agreeably to his professions. He would be “subject to principalities and powers—he would obey Magistrates, and be ready to do every good work.” He would be a practicer of every social virtue—a friend to the most lasting interests of all mankind; as he professes, that “all the law is fulfilled in one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”

But in order to be qualified as a licensed Teacher under such an Establishment, more may very reasonably be expected. The changing circumstances, and state of party in a nation, may require still fur-

ther securities. Let us enquire what in reason they should be.

Such licensed Teacher should enter into the following engagement with the State, provided the State authorises and supports his mission.

1. He should first make the Declaration contained in my preceding Letter, in the presence of the person or persons who are appointed by the Civil Power to ordain him.

2. He might further declare in the words of the Protestant oath, appointed to be taken by the Fellows of most Colleges in the University of Cambridge, "I, A. B. do promise in the presence of God, that I will heartily and stedfastly adhere to the true religion of Christ, and prefer the authority of Holy Scripture before the opinions of men—that I will make the word of God the rule of my Faith and practice, and look upon other things which are not proved out of the word of God as human only—that I will readily with all my power oppose doctrines contrary to the word of God—that in matters of religion I will prefer truth before custom, what is written before what is not written."

3. He should take the oath of Allegiance to the person of the King.

4. He should take the oath of Supremacy, wherein he renounces all foreign jurisdiction.

5. He should take an oath against Simony in the presence of the Ordinary.

6. He should take an oath of Canonical Obedience to his Ordinary.

7. He might make a solemn renunciation of the leading and essential tenets of Popery, according to the form of Declaration required of every Member of Parliament before he is permitted to take his seat in either House, and for the same reasons.

8. Penal

8. Penal inflictions should be incurred, in case of a failure in reading the Liturgy, as established by Law.

A licensed Teacher professing such religion—declaring such resolutions—and under such obligations, would, in all probability, fulfil the purpose of the State in his appointment.

If these Oaths and Declarations will not bind him to the performance of his duty, and at the same time be a sufficient security to the State, it is impossible that any can be conceived by the wit of man, which will answer these purposes.

Let the offices of Ordination and Dr. Burn's Ecclesiastical Law be consulted under the heads *Benefice, Oaths, Ordination, and Public Worship*, and it will be found, that all these securities, except the Protestant Oath of Elizabeth, and the Declaration of the 30th of Charles the Second, are already required of every person to be admitted to a benefice in the English Church.

Let me then, Sir, recommend to your serious consideration, till you hear from me again, the following query, with its answer :—What is wanted to realize the preceding Utopian Establishment in our country ?

Ans. Little more than the repealing one chapter of the 13th of Elizabeth, and a few clauses of the last Act of Uniformity; the reasons for promulging which are now happily no more.

In a future Letter, I shall endeavour to shew, among other matters, that the continuance of the statutes enjoining subscriptions, not only defeat the good purposes to be expected from all the other customs and statutes relating to this subject—not only render that ecclesiastical corporation, which is called, though improperly, the Church, an unnecessary burden, instead of an useful servant of the

the State ; but have also contributed to the growth of Atheism, irreligion, and profaneness ; and, if not quickly repealed, will, in all human probability, utterly annihilate the small remainder of true religion and virtue in our land.

L E T T E R I I I .

S I R,

IN my first Letter to you upon the subject of Subscriptions, I endeavoured to convince you, that a requisition of them to systematical confessions of faith and doctrine, reduces to a state of inefficiency that more important and really useful engagement of the Christian Minister, which binds him to the preaching of whatever he himself shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved from the words of Holy Writ.

In my second, after demonstrating the necessity of a legal establishment for the purpose of inculcating the religious principle upon the mind of every member of the community, I endeavoured to satisfy you, that the sanctions which would remain, after the laws relating to Subscription were repealed, would be abundantly sufficient for that salutary purpose — would effectually guard against all opinions and practices that might prove prejudicial to the State.

In this, I shall beg your attention to a few observations upon the inconsistency of our Churchmen, in maintaining the sufficiency of the Scriptures, at the same time that they plead for an *established* interpretation of them. In the discussion of this argument, I shall consider you as not unacquainted

quainted with those leading principles of Protestantism, upon which we affect to justify our separation from the Church of Rome; and as a Member of the British Senate shall suppose you to be well versed in those political reasons which were assigned for disclaiming her jurisdiction—reasons which clearly evidenced her exercise of dominion in our land to be incompatible with the rights of our Imperial Crown.

But in clearing this matter, we must make some previous observations upon the Papal authority, which has too often, I think, been considered in an improper point of view.

The distinct ideas of spiritual and temporal jurisdiction were adopted long before the elevation of the Roman Pontiff to an ill-grounded pre-eminence among his brethren.

For some hundred years before that memorable event, the authority claimed by the Church was equal, if not, in some points, superior, to what the Pope exercised in the plenitude of his power, and may be in part accounted for in the following manner:

The persecutions which Christianity endured in the second and third centuries, many of which are to be ascribed to the ambitious claims and practices of its Prelates, compelled its professors to form a Society in opposition to the State. The regulations of this Society, with respect to its government and discipline in the times of persecution, gave it a stability, and even an independency, after the State had acceded to the faith.

Hence the conversion of the Empire to Christianity may be more properly styled the victory and the triumph of one community styled the Church, over another community called the State, which
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had so long conflicted with it, but was at length found unable to resist its power.

The claims of the Clergy still increased, until at length the civil rights and possessions of men were annihilated or absorbed in the all-devouring power and patrimony of the Church. The event was a despotic power of the Priest to impose whatever doctrines he thought fit, joined with an absurd and senseless superstition, which soon entombed in one gloomy grave whatever was valuable of the Arts—the Learning—and the Religion of mankind.

Popery, properly speaking, was nothing more than the change of Clerical jurisdiction from the Republican, or rather Aristocratical, to the Monarchical form. Many of the German Reformers nobly vindicated, and justly asserted, the right of private judgment, in opposition to this authority; but this was not the case with us. Our boasted Reformation, in fact, was little more than an act of justifiable rebellion against our Spiritual Head; wherein we renounced the dominion of the Universal Monarch, and set up a Spiritual Head of our own.

But the pretended right to an authority in controversies of Faith, which Churchmen claimed while united under one visible Head, was asserted and exercised with the same pertinacity as before. While the power of the Priest or Sovereign Pontiff remained unshaken and unquestioned, Subscriptions indeed were not heard of; for where the right to a despotic dominion is acknowledged by a blind submission to the ruling powers, a declaration of assent to Articles would be superfluous, and would imply a latent right of
private

private judgment. Our ancestors reposed an implicit confidence in their ghostly fathers; and therefore, with respect to the number and absurdity of the Impositions, their case was more deplorable than ours: but with respect to the too probable permanency of these innovations upon the gospel, and some other circumstances, our case perhaps may be more deplorable than theirs.

An equality between the two powers which are represented as contracting with each other, is all that is now contended for: and the more humble term of an *alliance* between the Church and State, as contained in the schemes of De Marca and Warburton, serves to express the High Church notions of these times. But every claim of the Church to an independent jurisdiction, which in the remotest degree affects the *temporalities* of its members, is utterly indefensible. — The Church of England, considered with respect to the actual exertion of any power, should be considered as a society of men incorporated for the purpose of teaching the religion of the Gospel—is the creature—is the servant of the State; and therefore, like other corporations, has no authority to enact or impose any thing which affects the liberty of the subject.

With respect to the Gloucestrian fiction, thanks to the civil powers! all apprehension of danger from it is removed as far as relates to the fabrication of *new* Articles. The Church indeed continues to assert that she has authority in controversies of faith; but her constitutional Representative, the Convocation, has not sitten for some time, and it is to be hoped will never sit again.

However, before this Assembly had intirely lost its jurisdiction by the absurdity of its claims, and its credit by its personal abuse, some of its Members

bers drew up a set of decisions and decrees, and had influence enough with the State, to get them bound upon their successors in their own profession, by an iniquitous law—had influence enough with a pedantic and an arbitrary King to get them also bound upon every other profession of men, who in the remotest degree might affect their interest and power. But while these laws and ordinances which enjoin Subscription to human Articles, and formularies of Faith, shall be permitted to remain, the Reformation is so far from being completed, that it in fact, with respect to a material part of it, is but just begun. The Bishops, whose power and influence are truly formidable, will continue to make these Articles the only tests of orthodox belief—they will examine in them at their ordinations, and neglect the Scriptures—they will discourage the reading of these Scriptures with a papistical apprehension, almost amounting to a reprobation of the word of God. Upon a nearer view, Academical men might see the absurdity of these famous monuments of human weakness, and might suspect an opposition between these Articles drawn up by fallible men, and the infallible word of God; and therefore in the Universities, the Bishops and the Heads of Houses will discourage all attention to them both *. An intolerant spirit,

* A Person of high station in the Church has in his hands authentic evidences of some facts, which, unless the evil be very speedily remedied, may be appealed to as Proofs, that these consequences of Subscriptions have actually taken place.—See the Rev. Dr. Powell's celebrated Commencement Sermon, preached 1757, and lately re-printed.—See also the Third of Dr. Hallifax's Sermons, lately preached before the University of Cambridge, and published at the request of the Vice-Chancellor and Heads of Houses.

joined with a senseless superstition, the natural fruit of ignorance, will take deep root—an universal depravity of manners—a want of every principle which dignifies the soul of man, must inevitably succeed. And therefore with respect to morals, religious learning, and Church power, our only change will be, as the very sensible Author of a Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury has expressed it, “We shall have an aggregate of Popes instead of one.”†

Is it not therefore, Sir, a solemn farce and mockery of God, for our Churchmen to assert the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures in all things

† This sentiment seems in part to be confirmed by the following passage in D’Ewe’s Journal, p. 239.

Mr. Peter Wentworth, in a speech in the House of Commons, inveighing against a message of the Queen to the House, *that they should not deal in any matters of religion, but first to receive from the Bishops*, (for which speech he was afterwards sent to the Tower) expresseth himself thus: “I have heard of old Parliament-men, that the banishment of the Pope and Popery, and the restoring of true religion, had their beginning from this House. and not from the Bishops; and I have heard, that few laws for religion had their foundation from them. And I do surely think, (before God I speak it) that the Bishops were the cause of that doleful message; and I will shew you what moveth me so to think. I was, amongst others, the last Parliament, sent unto the Bishop of Canterbury, for the Articles of Religion that then passed this House. He asked me, why we did put out of the Book the Articles for the homilies, consecrating of Bishops, and such like? Surely, Sir, said I, because we were so occupied in other matters, that we had no time to examine them how they agreed with the word of God. What, said he, surely you mistook the matter; you will refer yourselves wholly to us therein? No, by the faith I bear to God, said I, we will pass nothing before we understand what it is; for that were but to make you Popes; make you Popes who list, said I, for we will make you none; and sure Mr. Speaker, the speech seemed to me to be a Pope-like speech; and I fear lest our Bishops do attribute this of the Pope’s Canons unto themselves, *Papa non potest errare.*”

necessary to salvation, and yet to insist upon our assent to Articles conceived in unscriptural terms? If the Scriptures are sufficient unto salvation, a Churchman can have no honest reasons for wishing the establishment of any formulary of faith and doctrine besides those Scriptures; and that the Statesman has reason to be satisfied without Subscription to such formularies, I think may be collected from my second Letter.

But before I dismiss this subject, I must take notice of a favourite argument, which has been often urged to evince the necessity of Subscription to systematical confessions and human Articles of faith. It has been pleaded, that although the sufficiency of the Scriptures is allowed, yet *explanations* of those Scriptures are highly edifying, even when such explanations are conceived in human words. The utility of discourses from the pulpit must be granted; the sense of Scripture may be thereby made clearer and more determinate; why then may it not be allowed to fix the sense of Scripture in an established formulary of faith?

In the first place, this argument would prove too much. It would prove that there was no necessity for such discourses at all, the Articles alone would answer every end which could be supposed to be the Preacher's view.

In the next place we should consider, that in the case of expositions of Scripture from the pulpit, or the press, although the expounder should endeavour to shew the conformity of his doctrine to the word of God by sober argument, sound criticism, or rational enquiry, yet we have the liberty of rejecting his interpretations, if we think we have got better of our own; but the exercise of this power of judging for ourselves is utterly

utterly annihilated in the case of a Subscription to an established formulary : The Preacher's powers are tied up, he is prohibited from giving us his own interpretation, and the hearer must acquiesce, for the want of a better, in the interpretation already given by the Church.

We may talk then of the sufficiency of the Scriptures as we please ; but while the laws establishing subscription to human formularies remain, the voice of the Articles shall alone be heard—the ignorance and superstition of mankind shall for a while preserve the shadow of religion in our land—its substance shall be no where found. Improvements in science and the arts shall at length disclose the astonishing absurdity of our national faith. The Scriptures shall be disbelieved, because their genuine simplicity and excellence are concealed by designing men from human view—the Articles shall be disbelieved, because they are held forth to it.

The Legal Establishment therefore in our country does not answer the end it was intended to promote. It does not tend to generate, to inculcate, and to cultivate the sense of religion on the minds of men. It too often produces the reverse. It should therefore, Sir, be either abolished or reformed.

L E T T E R IV.

S I R,

THE Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England are established by authority of Parliament, as well as by Ecclesiastical sanctions: It should therefore seem, that, at the time of their establishment, our ancestors conceived the belief of them to be of high importance to every member of society, and considered them as Points of Doctrine worthy of being implanted in every English breast.

But we trust the Legislature of this day will, upon a fair and candid inspection of these Articles, form a very different judgment; and I hope, Sir, to make it appear to you, that if the Ministers of the Gospel were to proceed in the execution of their charge upon this idea, they must preach away the common sense of nine parts in ten of those who hear them, and effect a still more deplorable change upon the hearts of the remainder.

The First Article of our Church professes to treat of Faith in the Holy Trinity—an expression not to be found in Scripture, a doctrine not connected with the performance of a single duty in social life. A man may believe the contrary, and yet be a good Christian—a good Father—a good Master—a good Husband—a good Citizen—and a good Friend. A speculative Divine, therefore, should be indulged in the liberty of believing this Article, of subscribing it, and of writing about it, if he please; but I am so far from thinking it expedient that such an Article should be established by an act of the State, that I should rather wish the Clergy, who are the hired servants of the State, for the purpose

purpose I have so often mentioned of inculcating the religious principle, might be prohibited from preaching upon a subject of so inflammatory a texture, and which by its very nature has an obvious tendency to destroy all rational religion, with mutual love and charity, its fairest fruits.

With respect, then, to the First Article, in order to make it of any use, the title should be changed; it should be said to treat, not of the Trinity, but of the Unity of God; and the latter part of it should be expunged, not because it is false, but because it is unintelligible, unless by men of very elevated minds. †

If the First Article is faulty, the Second is like unto it, and the subscription of the Teacher to its truth should by no means be insisted on. It defines with a logical, or rather chemical precision, what never was comprehended, or ever can be comprehended, by the help of those rational powers which we now enjoy.

As for the Third Article, which treats of the going down of Christ into hell, I cannot conceive how the State can be interested in the decision of such a question. I may believe him to be the Author of my Salvation, and act accordingly, without believing that he assailed the Devil in his own dominions; as the compilers of our Articles certainly supposed he did.

The Fourth Article contains two very important points of doctrine. It treats, though in a manner not absolutely exceptionable, upon the Resur-

† Dr. Hallifax asserted in one of his Sermons, lately preached at Cambridge, that the Three Persons of the Godhead *were united though distinguished, distinguished though but one*. The expression was heard by hundreds; but, with many others of a similar import, was not thought worthy of being retained in the printed copies.

rection and Ascension of our Lord. But every person who believes the Scriptures cannot but believe these doctrines, and therefore a subscription to them is unnecessary. The Legislature, however, may so far interfere with propriety, as to enjoin the preaching upon them, on account of their manifest connection with the practice of piety and virtue.

With respect to the Fifth Article, it is only an expansion of a part of the proposition which concludes the First. It recalls to our remembrance that unchristian Controversy, which was long maintained between contending Churchmen upon the Holy Ghost's procession from the Son. The belief of it is not naturally connected with the practice of any social duty. Many have believed the divine mission of Jesus, without supposing this procession. It is unwise, therefore, to append emoluments to the profession of such faith.

Were I a Member of that assembly in which you, Sir, early evidenced the possession of all those virtues which can ornament the head and heart, I would seriously propose a subscription to the Sixth Article alone, as a proper substitute for subscription to all the rest. It contains the discriminating character of true Protestantism. It asserts the SUFFICIENCY of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation. But the privilege of interpreting those Scriptures for ourselves, which seems to be the natural consequence of the sufficiency maintained in this Article, is intirely abrogated by the imposition of the remaining Thirty-eight.

Laws are instituted to prevent real, not imaginary dangers to the State. I do not suppose that there is a single person in the kingdom who, if Subscriptions were removed, would apprehend the

the Common Law in danger of being superseded by the Mosaic Code.

The Negative of the most material part of this Seventh Article has been ably supported by the Right Reverend Author of the Divine Legation, who has more than once endeavoured to bring down Theological vengeance upon others, on the mere suspicion of their taking the same liberty of private judgment, which he has so remarkably exercised himself. Should these Papers ever fall in the way of that Gentleman, he will understand me, when I say that he has ventured, in a very public manner, to accuse a Member of the Church of England of a departure from his Subscriptions, but, though solemnly called upon, has not chosen to attempt a confirmation of his charge by the proper evidences.

A man that subscribes the Eighth Article, virtually unsubscribes the Sixth.

The Ninth Article treats of original, or Birth sin; but the State has to do with those sins only which are committed after Birth.

I would gladly avoid the consideration of the Eight following Articles, of which the Fourteenth alone can be of any use. I am satisfied that, upon perusal of them, no English Senator will see the necessity of binding these metaphysical subtilties upon the consciences of those who are sent forth by the Civil Power to instruct the people in the necessity of obedience to the laws of God and man. While they continue unintelligible, they are useless. When understood, they are prejudicial, nay, even dangerous, to the State: They strike at the root of all morality, the State's surest safeguard and support; and if the Gospel speak a different language, which I trust it does, the establishment of these Articles by the authority of Par-

Parliament amounts to an authoritative renunciation of that Gospel, in such points of faith and doctrine—a danger always to be apprehended when the State lends its sanctions to any systematical confessions whatsoever, conceived in unscriptural terms.

The doctrine contained in the Eighteenth Article is equally abhorrent from Christian Charity and Christian Truth. All preaching upon it should be discouraged by the State; it would promote the growth of intolerance, the practice of every evil work.

The insertion of the Nineteenth is a melancholy evidence of the folly and presumption of High Church Men, denying infallibility to every community of Christians, that excepted to which themselves belong.

I have already under the signature of *Paulinus* in this Paper, attempted to explain the real meaning and natural consequences of the Twentieth Article.† It is fraught with the very essence of genuine Popery. It tends to elevate the Priest above the King. The doctrine therefore contained in it should not only be discouraged but proscribed by the State; nor would it be contrary to sound Policy, if every Civil Society should for its own security against designing Churchmen, enjoin subscription to the following Article: “the Church hath *not* authority in controversies of Faith.”

* The third Letter addressed to the Cambridge Undergraduates, wherein this subject is treated of, appeared before this in the *Whitehall Evening-Post*; but is now inserted after it for obvious reasons.

The Twenty-first Article asserts in part what is more fully declared in the Sixth, viz. the sufficiency of the Scriptures ; and therefore is unnecessary.

The Three next are reasonable enough : but upon the same plea that these are inserted into the confession of the national Faith, ten thousand other propositions of equal import might plead for admittance within the pale of the Establishment.

As to the Twenty-fifth, with these that follow to the 23d, though some may appear expedient as tests to exclude the Papists, yet others have an immediate tendency to keep up that spirit of contention between the Polemical Divines, which for the publick good of the Community, as well as Christian Charity, should be discountenanced, instead of being encouraged by the State. The Papist is sufficiently guarded against by Declarations of another kind ; and with respect to the rest, it may be observed once for all, that the apparent truth of a doctrine or its supposed congruity with Scripture are not the only circumstances to be considered, when a question is moved concerning the propriety of its establishment. The awful sanction of the Legislature should be only lent to those, which immediately tend to render individuals good Citizens and good Men.

The Thirty-second Article, maintaining the lawfulness of the marriage of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, is rendered unnecessary by the general temper of the times. And I cannot easily be brought to think that, if Subscription to this Article should be removed, any Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, will hesitate about the lawfulness of marrying, when other circumstances shall render it fitting and convenient.

As for the avoiding excommunicated persons; reason, scripture, humanity, and the good of the community, with one voice cry out against such a relick of inquisitional jurisdiction; and, if an Article of this kind be necessary, require that the negative of this should be subscribed.

With respect to the 34th I shall only observe, that if the authority of the magistrate in any point to which his jurisdiction reacheth, and in which the means of conviction are so open as in the case before us, cannot be supported by penalties, it will never be supported by Declarations and Subscriptions.

Whether the Homilies contain a godly and an wholesome doctrine, and necessary for these times, you best will judge when you have read them. The Article enjoins the reading of them in our Churches. I shall only say, that were any Clergyman to obey the injunction, his Clerk would be his only Auditor.

The calling upon us to allow the excellence of the forms of consecrating Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, can answer no good purpose. The persons ordained sufficiently shew their approbation of them, by submitting to them as modes appointed by the State.

The oath of Supremacy taken by every person called upon to subscribe the Articles, renders subscription to the 37th absolutely unnecessary.

That the goods of men are not held in common, every person will know to his cost, who by force invades them, or by fraud endeavours to purloin them.

The last Article, maintaining the lawfulness of oaths, may safely be omitted. Articles might be increased

increased to an indefinite number, if every regulation adopted for the purposes of civil society must also receive the sanction of the Church.

These imperfect observations may lead you to a conviction, with respect to some truths of considerable importance in the present controversy. I shall mention a few which appear to me as such, and then shall take my leave.

First, that the requiring of assent to any explanatory Articles of faith and doctrine, amounts to a declaration that the Scriptures are not sufficiently explicit in those points which concern the future welfare of individuals, or the present welfare of the State.

Secondly, that upon the supposition these doctrines are selected by the State as a kind of directory for the Preacher's labours, the majority of them are not sufficiently important to deserve the countenance of the Legislature ; as they are very remotely connected with those points of practice, on which a public teacher should insist.

Thirdly, that the requisition of subscription to them is an invasion of the dearest rights of men—a temptation to insincerity and prevarication in those who should stand the clearest of such imputations, and must powerfully obstruct all further knowledge in the Scriptures.

Fourthly, that very many of these Articles, so far from having a tendency to promote real piety and virtue, appear to inculcate a spirit of contention, to produce intolerance ; and, by stating the terms of the Divine favour as consisting in faith alone, eventually encourage every species of impiety and vice.

Fifthly, that it is morally impossible to have a learned, a conscientious, a laborious, and an useful Clergy, while the laws relating to Subscription shall remain.

And therefore, lastly, that the present, as well as the future welfare of every individual in the English nation calls aloud for their repeal.

A N
A D D R E S S
T O T H E
G E N T L E M E N
O F T H E
U N I V E R S I T Y o f C A M B R I D G E,

*Who intend proposing themselves, the ensuing
January, as CANDIDATES for the Degree
of BACHELOR IN ARTS.*

L E T T E R I.

GENTLEMEN,

AS it is my persuasion, that, with the usual literary accomplishments requisite to the degree which you propose soliciting, a love of sincerity and ingenuous dealing is united; suffer me to hint my thoughts upon a subject which appears to me highly worthy of your most attentive consideration.

You will shortly be called upon to declare your unfeigned assent to a set of propositions—to a form
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of worship—to a collection of rites and ceremonies—in a manner which will throw upon you the worst imputation which can be cast upon men of honour and on Christians, unless you absolutely and entirely approve them.

Unless, therefore, you prefer the reputation of being esteemed able disputants, to the heart-felt satisfaction of knowing yourselves to be 'honest men, you will suspend the present course of your studies, until you have satisfied yourselves with respect to the truth and propriety of those articles and forms; to the full approbation of which you declare, that you *willingly* and *ex animo* subscribe.

It is not my intention to send you to those ingenious expositors, who will torture your imagination with a thousand interpretations, many of them contrary to each other, and all of them, perhaps, to Scripture and to common sense; but barely to point out to you a course of study, similar to what you are now pursuing in philosophical subjects, and which must be resolutely and conscientiously engaged in, unless you would chuse that the imputation of ignorance, indolence, prevarication, or down-right dishonesty, should stand as a recorded charge against you in your first public act of life.

The first five Articles, to the truth of which you are required to bear the most solemn testimony, relate to Faith in the Holy Trinity—the Nature, History, and Offices of the Second Person in that Trinity—the Personality, Majesty, and Glory of the Holy Ghost. To be satisfied in these respects, the shortest way is to consult your Bibles. These points of Faith are declared with sufficient precision in the Articles: It is your business to see how far they are agreeable to the Word of God; and, if they be found in your apprehension discordant

dant with it, to bear your testimony against them, by refusing to subscribe them.

The Sixth Article is very just ; but as the whole Western World were once of a different persuasion with respect to a point asserted in it, it will be your duty to enquire into the nature of Protestantism, and get some idea of the arguments whereby that best of causes is maintained against the bigotry and sophistry of papal Rome.

You are from conviction to form such an idea of the correspondency between the Old Testament and the New, as will enable you to subscribe the Seventh Article of your Church without a doubt.

In the affair of the Three Creeds, the conformity of which with Scripture you must profess, there may be some difficulty. You must read them with diligence and care ; and if you really can reconcile the dogmatical parts of Athanasius's with the unsystematic language of the New Testament, and his intolerant spirit with the mild and meek demeanour of your Saviour, you may then believe him to be a Christian, and subscribe his Creed.

The Ninth Article seems to allow some little latitude in a point of small importance ; but from thence to the Nineteenth Article exclusive, your attention will be called to doctrines which have much agitated the world with learned contests and opposite decisions ; but to which, tho' expressed in forms of human speech, your full, entire, and unreserved assent must be subscribed.

The Nineteenth Article, though not so prolix as some of the preceding, contains abundant matter for your serious consideration. It gives you a definition of the visible Church of Christ. You are to satisfy yourselves of the justness of this definition,

finition, that is to say, of its conformity with the
 Scripture doctrine on this subject. It moreover
 asserts that the Churches of Jerusalem, of Alexan-
 dria, and of Antioch, have erred. But with what
 confidence can you pretend to throw so severe a
 reflection upon large assemblies of men, without
 examining their history and peculiar tenets? You
 would resent such ungenerous treatment in your
 own cases. Were any reflection of the like sort to be
 thrown upon the Church of England,—upon the
 University of Cambridge,—upon your private
 Colleges,—you would at least demand that such
 bold impugner would condescend to point out the
 particular instances which deserve such reproach.
 With respect indeed to the Church of Rome, it
 has been usual with us, upon all occasions, to give
 her the worst of characters, insomuch that we have
 thought no name too bad to express our abhorrence
 of her abominations; yet even this I am afraid is
 often done without the proper knowledge and
 conviction, and is often perhaps attended with a
 spirit of intolerance equal to her own. But I would
 have you, whom I am now addressing, fully sa-
 tisfied of the guilt, before you set your names to
 any imputation of it; ever recollecting how despi-
 cable is the appearance of the man, who solemnly
 objects a charge, which he is not able to make
 good.

I shall reserve the remainder of the Articles for
 a future Paper; what I have already pointed out
 to your attention will be sufficient to employ you
 till you hear from me again. You may perhaps
 object the want of time for the consideration of
 such matters. It is a serious objection, and your
 Superiors are much to blame for subjecting you to
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the necessity of subscribing at an age, and in circumstances, when you have neither sufficient assistance, nor sufficient leisure for the enquiry. *They* are to answer for the, perhaps, illegal, and unstatutable imposition; but the conscientious compliance with this imposition is entirely *your* concern.

It has been said, that an attempt will shortly be made to relieve you from this cruel alternative, of subjecting yourselves either to the charge of insincerity, or of losing your degrees. Most heartily do I pray for its success.

LETTER II.

GENTLEMEN,

PRESUMING upon your favourable indulgence, I take the liberty of addressing you a second time upon the subject of Subscriptions.

We have already briefly considered the first Nineteen Articles of our Church. The Twentieth will require a little of that steady attention, which you know to be necessary for the investigation of mathematical truth. And, after all, I will not promise you a satisfaction in the discovery, equally grateful with the sensation which, without doubt, you have frequently experienced in the enucleation of a Newtonian proposition.

In the Twentieth Article then it is asserted, That the Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and *authority in controversies of faith.*

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As the visible Church of Christ is considered by our Articles as a congregation of faithful men, without doubt it has a *power* of decreeing any rites, and ceremonies, and forms, which the members of it can agree upon. We will therefore now only enquire what kind of *authority* such congregation can lawfully exercise in matters of faith.

And first, with respect to the meaning of the word *auctoritas*, we will take the celebrated words of Tertullian for our guides. They are as follow: "*Differentiam inter ordinem et plebem constituit Ecclesiae auctoritas, et honor per ordinis confectum sanctificatus.*" Now as Tertullian was a Lawyer, we must explain his terms according to the legal ideas of the times. The word *auctoritas* then, according to the Roman Lawyers, signifies a *decree* or *resolution* of a solemn assembly met together for the purpose of making laws. It is also used to denote the edicts and rescripts of the Magistrate. And in after-times, when the *opinions* of eminent lawyers had themselves been hardened into law, they also were complimented with the venerable appellation of *Authorities*. From hence it may be collected, that, when we hear that the Church hath authority in controversies of faith, we are to understand that the Church hath a lawful power of hearing, judging upon, and deciding concerning controversies of faith.

Proceed we next to enquire in what hands must the power of exercising this authority be lodged. For if by the Church is meant the whole congregation of faithful men, no more is asserted, than if we were told that the power of making laws for the direction of our civil conduct, and of decid-

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ing controversies about property, is lodged in the people of Great Britain : And it may be lodged there till dooms-day without a single exercise of such power, unless something further be added to the description. Let us subjoin the words *representatively assembled*, which may be plainly implied, and the matter of jurisdiction will be clear. The proposition will stand thus : As all *authority* in temporal concerns is ultimately vested in the King, Lords, and Commons in Parliament assembled ; so all authority in controversies relating to faith is ultimately vested in a national Synod. The authority of such a Synod is thus guarded by the 139th Canon of the Church. " Whosoever shall hereafter affirm that the most *Holy Synod* of this nation, assembled in Christ's name, and by the King's Writ, is not *representatively* the true Church of England, let him be excommunicated, and by no means absolved till he publicly repent of this wicked error." That is to say, let him be accursed—devoted to the Devil—and separated from Christ and his Church's communion. See *Godolph. Repert. Can. p. 625, 626.*

This point then being established, we may further collect, that as the regulations and decisions of the British Parliament are binding upon the rest of the community, so the decisions of a national Synod are binding upon the rest of the Church, that is, upon all the remaining members of the congregation of faithful men who were not actually present at the national Synod. If therefore the Church of England, *representatively* assembled, should decree, that salvation cannot be obtained without its pale, you are bound to assent to the proposition, and to subscribe it, if required. If the Church of England, *representatively* assembled,

should decree, that the body and blood of Christ are materially present in the Eucharist, you are bound to assent to the proposition, and subscribe it, if required. If the Church of England, *representatively* assembled, should decree that Athanasius had not settled the Trinitarian controversy with sufficient precision, you are bound to assent to the proposition, and to subscribe it, if required. But perhaps, you may demur. You have certainly the liberty of doing so: You have also the liberty of rebelling against your King, or rather you have the *power* of doing either; but then you must patiently and contentedly abide the consequences, viz. Drawing, hanging, and quartering, in the latter case; and excommunication, as before described, in the former.

It is our happiness, however, that the Church of England has, in exercising her *authority* with respect to the foregoing controversies, and indeed in all others whatsoever, always decided on the right side. And in this *rectitude* of her decisions at present consists, and will consist, as long as subscription to the Twentieth Article shall be established by law, the only essential difference between the Church of England and of Rome.

This Article further asserts, that the Church *ought not* to decree any thing against Holy Writ, or to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of salvation *besides the same*. To the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures you will readily subscribe; but the point before you in the case of the Bachelors degree is not a question *de Jure* but *de facto*. The robber on the highway certainly *ought not* to take your purse; whether he means to do so or nor, when he holds a pistol to your breast, is a different question; and he may demand your money,

money, and own he is wrong in doing so, in the same breath. The Church, as is clear from the Articles before us, has actually decided upon many points. She has exercised her authority pretty freely in controversies of faith; if against Scripture, a better testimony than her own confession that she hath no right to do so, is to be found in every Protestant breast. She holds forth these decisions, these interpretations of Scripture to your consideration; and the University, or rather King James's letter to the Heads of Houses, requires you to subscribe them as consonant to Holy Writ, previously to your admission to a Bachelor's degree. As Englishmen and as Protestants you may exercise, and ought to exercise, the right of private judgment in searching the Scriptures; and like the Beræans should enquire whether these matters be so. You may, if you please, enjoy the honourable appellation of Beræans, without declaring your testimony in favour of the Church; but if you mean to be Bachelors of Arts, you must *bonâ fide* acknowledge that all and every of her Articles are agreeable to the word of God, and as such subscribe them.

I have employed so much attention upon the Twentieth Article, that I have not left myself room to say any more at present, than that you may soon expect to hear from me again.

LETTER

L E T T E R III.

GENTLEMEN,

THE Twenty-first Article will require more consideration than I am afraid many of you can give to it. It asserts, "That whereas general Councils are assemblies of men, whereof *all* be not governed with the Spirit and Word of God, they may err, and sometimes have erred, in things pertaining unto God."—In order that you may form some idea of the course of study requisite to a conscientious subscription of this Article, I shall give you the following hints :—The Eastern general Councils were six in number. The Western Clergy, though the infallible Father was at their head, were obliged to meet twelve times before they could settle a system of faith entirely to their minds ; and even at last to little purpose ; as appears from the History of the Council of Trent, and the Article now before us. The History of these Councils is abridged in about as many folio volumes, which it will be necessary for you to read over, together with the fathers they refer to, before next January, if you have not already perused them.

As to the affair of Purgatory decided against in the Twenty-second Article, there is certainly some flaw, not in the superstructure of the building, but, as I vehemently suspect, in the foundation. Persons, when they depart out of this life, are certainly of very different characters : and as the doctrine of an intermediate state must in any wise be retained in the Church, in order that the Philosophers

sophers may not be affronted who maintain the natural immortality of the human soul, it must be held, that such persons immediately enter upon those different states to which the judgment of God, founded on the prevailing character of their lives, shall think proper to consign them. You have the fate of the righteous thus determined with tolerable precision in the Burial Service, wherein it is asserted, that "the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity;" an assertion which has been thought by many learned persons to militate against some plain and positive assertions in the Scriptures: But after you have made some progress in the very delectable theory and practice of Subscription, you will be able to comprehend, that instances like the foregoing, which in common life are distinguished by the title of contradictory assertions, may wear a very different aspect when they are *ecclesiastically* considered.—All the writers upon Articles are wont to refer them to a chapter which treats upon the *latitude of interpretation*; but I would wish you to suspend your judgment till you have perused a treatise shortly intended to be published, intituled, "The Harmony between the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of the Church of England; and the entire consonancy of them all with Common-sense and Scripture, considered, vindicated, and maintained."

Take heed, that, by the words *congregation* in the *Lord's Vineyard*, in the Twenty-third Article, you understand the Church of England; otherwise you will render the Article replete with folly, intolerance, and falshood.

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The Twenty-fourth Article declares it "to be repugnant to the Word of God to have public prayer in a tongue not understood by the *people*;" but as clear and intelligible ideas are necessary in order to form intelligible words, do you, I mean as many of you as are intended for Holy Orders, study well the Athanasian parts of the Litany, otherwise we may have public prayer in a tongue not understood either by the *people* or the *parson*.

I am very sorry that your business in the Schools must be so long interrupted by the consideration of the subject treated upon in the six next Articles. Whole libraries, large as the Alexandrian, must be absolutely read through, before you can fairly set your hands to Articles which abound with such an infinitude of matter. With respect to one of them, I shall only observe, that you solemnly deny the change of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ; but then, in your Catechism, you assert "that the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." According to the Twenty-ninth Article, the wicked, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth, as Augustin saith, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, yet in no ways are they Partakers of Christ. *O ye righteous*, to your experience we must appeal! Explain this matter of the real, heavenly, spiritual, consubstantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist in intelligible language to the Candidates for the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

In the Thirty-first Article, the offering of Christ once made is said to be a perfect satisfaction for *all* the sins of the *whole* world. As the necessity of repentance

repentance on the part of the sinner is not mentioned, it is not to be supposed, unless you mean to fly in the face of the Eleventh Article, and would chuse to be reputed unorthodox. The best commentators upon this Article are to be found among the Methodistical tribe. I refer you therefore to the works of Whitefield, Wesley, and Hervey, upon this subject; a careful perusal of which, united with a few years attendance upon the Tabernacle, will render each of you as able a combatant in support of the Church, as A—g—s T—pl—y himself.

Upon the marriage of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, I have little to say. The Doctrine of the Thirty-second Article is most righteous and true; and it is really amazing that there ever should have been a doubt about the matter. We will therefore dismiss the subject with heartily wishing their Reverences good wives.

The religion of the Gospel may at first sight seem to inculcate an universal benevolence; and to recommend every human creature whatsoever as the proper object of your tenderest affections—the evil, of your pity—the virtuous, of your love. The Thirty-third Article is imposed in order to guard against such delusion. Enquire into the manner in which Heathens and Publicans were formerly treated by the Jews, and you will learn how to regulate your deportment to those persons who are solemnly excommunicated by your Church. With respect to *ipso facto* excommunicated persons, see the 2d, 3d, and 14th Canons of the Church. If you are in any doubt, Bishop Warburton will instruct you in the proper method of behaving to them.

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I have several things to say, I trust some of them worthy your consideration, upon the remaining Articles, as also upon the Homilies, the First and Second Books of which you doubtless propose to digest into propositions, before you set your hand to the Doctrines they contain. You may therefore expect to hear from me *once* more.

LETTER

L E T T E R IV.

GENTLEMEN,

I SINCERELY wish that the humane and generous attempt of the worthy Mr. Tyrwhitt * to relieve you, had been attended with the success which it so well deserved; but as the measure has been defeated by the arbitrary and unstatutable interposition of the Council of Six, it is become more than ever necessary, that you

* With respect to the character of this Gentleman, it may justly be said to be above all praise. His strong abilities, extensive learning, strict integrity, and most amiable manners, united with cool judgment and determined resolution, would reflect a lustre on the most distinguished station. And it is one of the strongest reasons for the removal of Subscriptions, that the imposition of human formularies of faith and doctrine, and the acknowledged imperfections in the forms of public worship, deprive the Church of England of the honour any longer of numbering among her worthies so truly honest and venerable a man. I should hurt his delicacy, were I to mention the sacrifices he has made at the shrine of integrity and honour; sacrifices only to be equalled by these of the Revd. Dr. Robertson, Author of a Tract entitled, "An Attempt to explain the words *Reason, Substance,*" &c. well worthy of the perusal of every friend to religious liberty and virtue.

In order to place the transaction alluded to in the true point of light, it will be expedient to refer to the following Paper, which was lately inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine.

"IF the publication of the enclosed Paper be not inconsistent with your general plan, I am well convinced, that the favouring the Public with it in your next month's Magazine will be very agreeable to many of your readers. It contains all the authority on which Subscriptions are required of such as take any degree in the University of Cambridge.

"At the end is a Grace, which was offered June the 11th, 1771, for the removal of such Subscription, but, without any reason being assigned, was prevented by the Caput from coming before the body of the University.

I am, &c.

X. Y.

Th

should be informed of the true nature of those celebrated bonds of Subscription which unite you to the Church.

The Articles to be subscribed unto by all Persons before they are admitted to any Degree; with the Grace tassed in the Year 1613, and King James's Direction to the V. Chancellor and Heads of Houses, enjoining Subscription to those Articles: To which is added, the Resolution of the House of Commons concerning the said Grace.

I. *Articles to be subscribed unto, &c.*

1. "THAT the King's Majesty, under God, is the only supreme Governor of this realm, and all other his Highness's dominions and countries as well in spiritual or ecclesiastical things or causes, as temporal; and that no foreign Prince, person, Prelate, State or Potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within his Majesty's said realms, dominions and countries.

2. "That the book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, *contained in it nothing contrary to the word of God*, and that it may lawfully so be used, and that he himself will use the form in the said book prescribed, in public prayer and administration of the Sacraments, and no other.

3. "That he alloweth the book of Articles agreed upon by the Archbishops and Bishops of both provinces, and the whole Clergy in the convocation holden at London in the year 1562, and that *He acknowledgeth all and every the Articles therein contained* (being in number 39, besides the ratification) *to be agreeable to the word of God.*

"We whose names are underwritten, do willingly and *ex animo* subscribe to the *three Articles*, before mentioned, and to all things in them contained.

Excerpta e Stat. Acad. Cantab. p. 25.

II. *The Grace by which Subscription to these Articles is required of Candidates for the Degree of Bachelor in Divinity, and of Doctor in each Faculty.*

"Jun. 2do, 1613. Placeat vobis, ut juxta tenorem Literarum a Serenissimo Rege Jacobo missarum, hoc in Senatu decernatur; ut nullus in posterum sibi concessam habeat Gratiam pro Gradu Baccalaureatus in Theologia, vel Doctoratus in aliquâ Facultate adipiscendo, qui non prius coram Domino Procancellario, aut ejus deputato, tribus Articulis sc. regii Primatus, Liturgiæ Anglicanæ, et Articulorum Religionis de quibus convenerunt Archiepiscopi, et Episcopi A. D. 1562, propria manu sua subscripserit. Et ut hæc

But before I enter upon this part of my task, I must fulfil the promise I made you with respect to those Articles not considered in my former Letter.

hæc concessio vestra loco statuti habeatur, et in libris Procuratorum infra decem dies inscribatur.

III. *King James's Direction to the V. Chancellor and Heads of Houses in the University of Cambridge, given by himself to Dr. Hills, V. Chancellor, &c. on Dec. 3, 1616, at Newmarket.*

"HIS Majesty signified his pleasure, that he would have all that take any degree in Schools to subscribe to the three Articles."

"After some other directions the King ordered that Mr. V. Chancellor and the two Professors of Divinity, or two of the Heads of Houses, do every Michaelmas, when his Majesty resorts into these parts, wait upon his Majesty, and give his Majesty a just account how these his Majesty's instructions are observed."

"A copy of these directions written, or at least signed, by the King himself, was soon afterwards sent by the Bishop of Winchester to the V. Chancellor with the following Letter.

To the Right Worshipful Dr. Hills, Master of Catherine-Hall, and V. Chancellor of Cambridge.

"Good Mr. V. CHANCELLOR,

"I Have sent you his Majesty's hand to his own directions. I think you have no precedent, that ever a King, first with his own mouth, then with his own hand, gave such directions; and therefore you shall do very well to keep that writing curiously, and the directions religiously, and to give his Majesty a good account of them carefully; which I pray God you may; and so with my love to yourself, and the rest of the Heads, I commit you to God. From Court this 12th day of Dec. 1616,

Your very loving friend,

JAMES WINTON.

IV. *The Resolution of the House of Commons concerning the Grace passed by the University of Cambridge in the year 1613.*

"In the year 1640, upon the report from the Grand Committee of Religion, it was resolved by the House of Commons, "That the statute made about twenty-seven years since in the University of Cambridge, imposing upon young Scholars a Subscription according to the 36th Article of the Canons made in the year 1603,

The Thirty-fourth Article treats of the traditions of the Church. You will find some little obscurity in the wording of this Article, which, upon your application, it will become the duty of your superiors to remove entirely to your satisfaction, before they call upon you to give your unreserved assent to it.

is against the law and liberty of the subject, and ought not to be pressed upon any Student or Graduates whatsoever."

Rushworth's Hist. Coll. vol. 4. p. 149.

"The Author of the History of the Puritans, after citing this Resolution of the House of Commons, takes notice, "that about five months forwards they passed the same resolution for Oxford, which was not unreasonable, because the Universities had not an unlimited power by the 36th Canon to call upon all their Students to subscribe, but only upon such Lecturers or Readers of Divinity whom they had a privilege of licensing; and to this I conceive the last words of the Canon refer; if either of the Universities offend therein, we leave them to the danger of the law, and his Majesty's censure.

"And it ought to be remembered, that all the proceedings of the House of Commons this year in punishing delinquents, and all their Votes and Resolutions about the circumstances of public worship, had no other view than the cutting off those illegal additions and innovations which the superstition of the late times had introduced, and reducing the discipline of the Church to the standard of statute law. No man was punished for acting according to law; but the displeasure of the House ran high against those who, in their public ministrations, or in their Ecclesiastical Courts, had bound those things upon the subject, which were either contrary to the laws of the land, or about which the laws were altogether silent."

Neal's Hist. vol. 1. p. 665.

The form of a Grace for the Removal of Subscription to the Three Articles contained in the 36th Canon.

"Placeat vobis, ut illi, qui Munia Scholastica in Regiis Statutis contenta expleverint, in posterum sibi concessam habeant
 "Gratiam pro Gradu in aliqua Facultate suscipiendo, et si tribus
 "Articulis in Canone tricesimo sexto comprehensis non subscripserint."

Copy

All pleasantry apart, I do not see how it is possible that you can *bona fide* declare, by the Subscription of your names, that the First and Second Books of Homilies contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, and necessary to these times, unless

Copy of a Petition, signed by a numerous Body of Undergraduates, and presented by Charles Crawford, Esq; Fellow-Commoner of Queen's College, to the Rev. Dr. Browne, Master of Pembroke-Hall, and Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, on Tuesday the 31st of last December.

To the Vice Chancellor and Senate of the University of Cambridge; the humble Petition of certain Undergraduates in the said University,

Sheweth,

THAT your Petitioners apprehend themselves, in consequence of engagements entered into with the University at the time of their admission or matriculation, to be under an obligation of devoting their attention to that course of studies, which is recommended to them by their Superiors:—That they are expected to employ themselves in the pursuit of natural and metaphysical knowledge;—to improve themselves in moral philosophy, and to acquaint themselves with the sentiments and language of those authors, who, in their time, were esteemed the greatest ornaments of Greece and Rome:—That, in consequence of this multiplicity of academical engagements, they have neither the leisure nor the opportunity of enquiring into the abstruser points of theology; that they nevertheless find themselves under a necessity of declaring their unfeigned assent to a set of theological propositions, usually called the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, apparently of high argument and great importance, or of subjecting themselves to a repulse in their Petition for a degree, which they have endeavoured to qualify themselves for, with much trouble, and at no little expence. Your Petitioners, therefore, intreat, if such indulgence can be granted to them without infringement of the University Statutes, that they may be released from the necessity of testifying their assent to the aforesaid propositions; or, that such timely assistance may be afforded in their respective Colleges, as will enable your Petitioners to satisfy their consciences in subscribing them.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

General

you previously read them. Perhaps there may be some difficulty in getting yourselves supplied with copies of these Homilies. You have a right,

General Evening-Post, from *Thursday, Dec. 5, to Saturday, December 7, 1771.*

Cambridge, Dec. 6. A grace was this day offered by Mr. Tyrwhitt for excusing Gentlemen who were Candidates for the Degree of *Bachelor of Arts*, from subscribing the Thirty-nine Articles. The grace was unanimously rejected by the Caput, for the same reason as before, "That the University had no power of making so material a change; and that the times were not favourable to so great an undertaking, which required the slow and wise deliberations of the Supreme Legislature, not the partial determinations of a few academics."

Whitehall-Evening-Post, from *Tuesday Jan. 14, to Thursday Jan. 16, 1772.*

Extract of a Letter from Cambridge, Jan. 13.

"Mr. Crawford went to the Vice-Chancellor to-day to request an Answer to the Petition of the Undergraduates, and addressed him in this manner:

"*Mr. VICE-CHANCELLOR,*

"I wait upon you again concerning the Petition of the Undergraduates, and would beg to be indulged with a few moments hearing. We have received as yet no direct Answer to our Petition, which, with great submission, we think deserves one. It has been *intimated* to us however, that it is thought improper to grant us our request at this time, lest those in authority in the University should be said to favour the Petition of the Clergy. We have been told, that after that is presented to Parliament, we may expect relief. Our Petition we think to be quite independent of the Petition of the Clergy. We beg that our Subscription to the Articles may be dispensed with, not because we object to any of them, but because we have not had an opportunity to study them. You must consider, Sir, that there are some who have subscribed their names, who are to take their degrees in a few days; they therefore claim an immediate relief. The most zealous Advocates for the Church will not impute to you a desertion of its cause, by granting our request; for all mankind with one voice cry out against the imposition we speak of as absurd and illegal, which

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however, to demand a perusal of them. And it is the duty of your superiors to give you what assistance they are able, with respect to the proofs of those doctrines which they contain.

I have often lamented, that the forms of consecrating Bishops and Ministers are not printed in every edition of the Book of Common Prayer. In the Thirty-sixth Article it is asserted, that there is nothing either superstitious or ungodly in those forms. But with what confidence can you presume to assert this by a solemn Subscription, when the chances are ten millions to one against your having seen them? Read them by all means, I beseech you. What opinion would you form of a man, who in the common transactions of life would venture to set his hand to a declaration of the truth of a fact, which, for any thing he knew of the matter, may be intirely and absolutely false?

The authority of the Civil Magistrate in spiritual as well as civil matters, is, within certain limits, unquestionable. Yet the subject deserves your attentive consideration, as the point principally asserted is the negative of Papal Jurisdiction, an evil once of portentous magnitude to every State in Christendom, the very mention of which, it is to be hoped, will be always horrible to an English Ear.

The Thirty-eighth Article will not give you much trouble. You may however read what Rogers, Welchman, and Burnet, say upon the occasion.

“an arbitrary Stuart, in the wantonness of his power, had *pleased* to establish in the University. What Answer, Sir, shall I carry back to the rest of the Subscribers?” The Vice-Chancellor then said, “That there were many names erased in the Petition, that some others were also willing to erase theirs, and that he had not power to grant the Petition.”

H

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The Thirty-ninth Article certainly requires some consideration. You have heard of the principles of the people called Quakers relating to oaths. Study your Bibles a little, and the Fathers of the Primitive Church, before you determine that their conduct in this instance is altogether indefensible.

The Ratification is not properly your concern: Yet it may perhaps puzzle heads more learned in Church matters than at present you can boast, to assign the reasons why it was judged necessary that these Thirty-nine Articles should be confirmed by the Subscription of the Archbishops and Bishops, in the year 1571; and why it is not judged necessary that the same security should be given by their Graces and their Lordships at this day. I wish the *inferior* Clergy of 1571, had also Subscribed for their successors and descendents; though perhaps even then some orthodox Divines might have concluded you within the obligation; Adam, you know, having *sinned* both for himself and his posterity.

I am under some apprehensions that you may be unwilling to enter upon the course of study which I have recommended in these Letters; and you may plead, that there will be time enough hereafter to read and to reflect upon the Articles which you have subscribed; but what opinion would you entertain of the discretion of a person who deferred the reading of a bond till after its execution? You would have as mean an opinion of the *Prudence* of the signer, as of the *Honesty* of the proposer. Consult your own understandings, you will see that your attesting the consonancy of the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies, with Holy Scripture, at your time of life, will amount to a *surrender* of a very valuable right, viz. the right of think-

thinking for yourselves with respect to points of highest consequence to your well being, into the hands of men, who will take all proper opportunities of reminding you of the nature and extent of the obligations you have entered into with the Church.

Some of you, perhaps, may hereafter enter into orders, and may with the best dispositions betake yourselves to the study of the Scriptures. You may find the genuine Doctrines of these Scriptures to be in direct opposition to the Doctrines you have Subscribed. You may imagine that the Sixth, or the Twentieth Article of the Church will allow you some liberty of interpreting Scripture for yourselves; but upon experience you will find your hopes are vainly founded. Your brethren, upon the least appearance of your deserting from the established Doctrines, will raise a clamour against you. A more importunate clamour will be raised in your own breasts; and if you wish to retain your integrity, you will, perhaps, be induced to resign your preferment at an age, and in circumstances, when such sacrifices cannot be made without some anxiety to others as well as to yourselves.

Some of you may, perhaps, hereafter devote yourselves to the profession of Physic, or of Law. In your declining years you may begin to think a little better of that awful hour, to which we are every day approaching. You will unquestionably recur to those interpretations of Scripture which you in early life Subscribed. You will place your confidence in what you have been taught to consider as the religion of your country. You will perhaps find these Articles opposed by the common-sense and reason of mankind: no other hope remains; each of you will have lived a stranger to the Gospel

Doctrines; you will each of you die a stranger to its consolations.

Perhaps some of you may be called upon hereafter to serve your Country in Parliament. Advancing years may convince you of the absurdity of the Doctrines you have Subscribed to, as the religion of the land. You will then be tempted to look upon all religions as alike the creatures of the State; and will therefore be devoid of that steady, persevering, manly fortitude in your Country's cause, which is one of the noblest virtues to which a British Senator can possibly aspire.

But if with minds informed by a careful education, you have acquired a veneration for that sacred Book, which holds forth a religion, reasonable—important—true; be not hasty in the performance of an act, which for any thing you know may amount to a renunciation of the whole. Study diligently your Bibles—study diligently the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church. Seek instruction from your Tutors, when any doubts arise; and if upon a careful enquiry, you shall in your consciences be persuaded, that the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England are all and every of them agreeable to the Word of God, why then, in the name of God, Subscribe them.

POSTSCRIPT.

P O S T S C R I P T.

I CANNOT dismiss these interesting Subjects, without offering some further considerations relating to the Association at the *Feathers*, and the Petition formed in consequence of its meetings.

A Publication intitled the *Christian Whig*, has lately appeared and has been sent, without the concurrence or even knowledge of a single Person of the Association, to every Member of the House of Commons.

It is written with good-sense, decency, and candour. The Writer declares, that he has no connection with the Petitioning Clergy, and he declares the truth. When he speaks of the removal of all Subscription to human formularies of faith and doctrine, he speaks the sentiments of the Petitioners; but when he pleads for the propriety of an application to the Bishops, he judges contrary to the opinion of every person concerned in the present appeal. The Gentlemen who think themselves aggrieved by the imposition of Subscriptions, affect not the character of Reformers of the Church. They will appear in the humbler guise of Petitioners for the removal of a grievance severely felt by individuals; which, though it was first laid upon their ancestors through the intrigues and intolerance of Churchmen, is unhappily confirmed at present by the law of the Land. Many of the Associated Members have reasons for believing that, with respect to their
Brethren

Brethren on the Bench, the WILL as well as the POWER is wanting to afford them the requested redress; and they will certainly esteem a reference of their case to their Lordships, as a polite though decisive method of refusing their suit.

The injudicious friends of the Petition frequently express themselves as if the request contained in the Petition would be granted, by a revival of the Articles, or a diminution of their number. But no revival is sought for in the Petition; the favour solicited is the disannulling the necessity of Subscription to any one; and whether such indulgence can be granted, without danger to the State, is a question which the Members of the Honourable House are very able to decide. Whatever be the event, the Petitioners will never quit their Protestant ground.

The Association at the *Feathers* mean, by every legal and just method, to attempt the gaining of redress in the matter of Subscription to human formularies of faith and doctrine. They have judged, upon maturest deliberations, a Petition to Parliament, and not a Petition either to the Bishops or his Majesty, a proper method of obtaining redress; and with anxiety they wait for the decision. Whatever steps they may take upon a refusal, I believe they will never be brought to consent to an application to the Bench.

It is true, a New Translation of the Bible—a Revival of the Liturgy are much wanted; but amendments in either fall not within the plan of the present Petitioners. All mention of Reformation in these points is untouched in the Petition. If the Bishops therefore, moved by the importance and propriety of the measure, should hereafter do any thing in either way, the Association at the

Feather

Feathers, though they would highly approve their conduct, will by no means interfere with them—the glory will be all their own. We have only at present to desire of their Lordships, that as they have often declared they are not able to help us in the affair of Subscriptions, they will not obstruct our righteous endeavours to help ourselves.

The sole request of the Petitioners is very plain and simple. I will mention it once more:—They beg to be relieved from the necessity of subscribing or declaring their unfeigned assent to any HUMAN FORMULARIES of Faith and Doctrine. A proper substitute, if any substitute be necessary, must be left to a wisdom superior to their own. Their meaning could not be mistaken, were the worthy Members of the House of Commons to deliberate among themselves a single moment upon the subject. A *Revisal* of the Articles, Amendments in the Liturgy, a New Translation of the Bible, are, though the Laity are also interested, certainly clerical concerns. But the terms upon which in a Protestant country the Clergy should hold their preferments—the Physician and Civilian be allowed to practise, are surely to be regulated at the sole discretion of the State.

Yet after all that has been said, the following question may be asked, and indeed it often has been asked with triumph by the adversaries of the present attempt:

Would you have the Church to authorise and send forth ministers and pastors among the people, without taking any security of them for the faithful discharge of their office; and particularly without guarding against their preaching false and erroneous doctrines? Already it has been replied, and the Reply expresses the sentiments of the learned and judicious Dr. Clarke,

that

that in the office of Ordination there are several questions put to every Priest, the answers to which seem to contain as ample security as any Christian Church can desire, or can be authorised to demand.

In the time of Ordination the Priest declares, and declares it at the altar,

1. That he is persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity for Eternal Salvation through Faith in Jesus Christ.

2. That he has determined, by God's Grace, out of the said Scriptures to instruct the people committed to his charge; and to teach nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which he shall be persuaded, may be concluded and proved by the Scripture.

3. That he will use both public and private Monitions, as well to the sick as to the whole within his cure, as need shall require, and occasion shall be given.

4. That he will be diligent in Prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and of the flesh.

5. That he will be diligent to frame and fashion his own self and his family according to the Doctrine of Christ, and to make both himself and them, as much as in him lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ.

6. That he will maintain and set forwards, as much as in him lieth, quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people, and especially among those that are or shall be committed to his charge.

F I N I S.